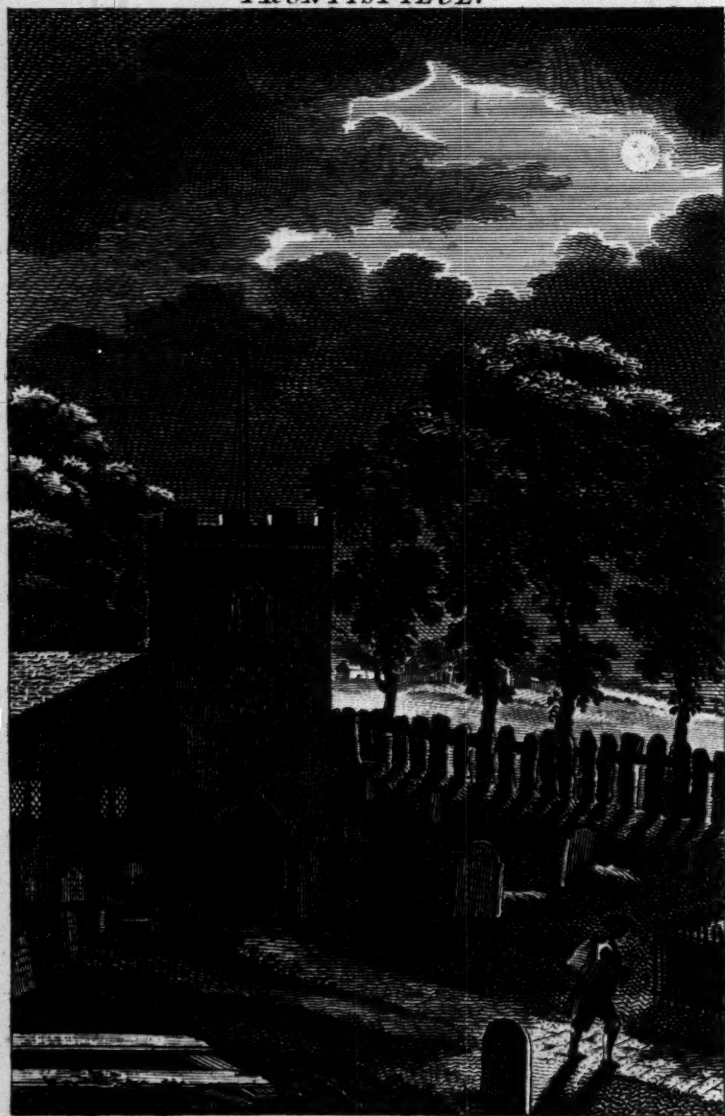


FRONTISPIECE.



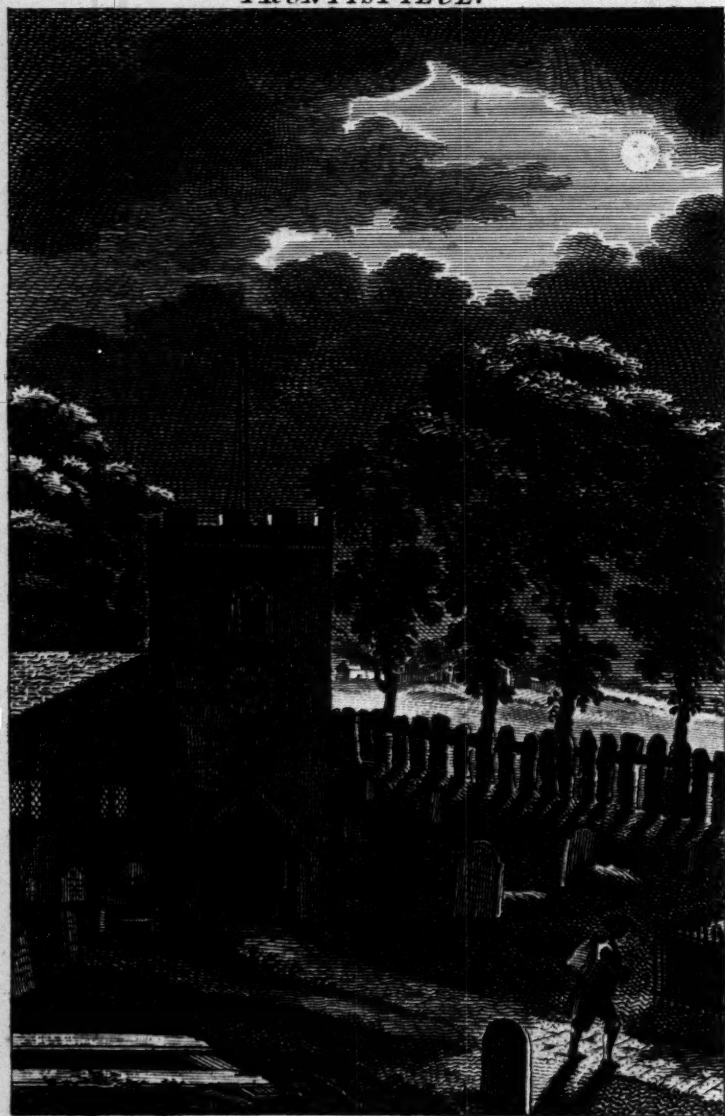
Dodd del.

Sparrow sculp.

*Oft in the lone church yard at night, I've seen  
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*Published Feb<sup>r</sup> 4 1788, by I. Fiddling, Paternoster Row.*

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Bo. Palmer  
(3.)

THE  
GRAVE;

By ROBERT BLAIR:

To which is added

GRAY'S ELEGY

In a Country Church Yard.

WITH

NOTES

Moral, Critical, and Explanatory.



The House appointed for all living  
LONDON:

Printed for JOHN FIELDING, N<sup>o</sup> 23, Pater-noster Row.

Price 1<sup>s</sup>. Entered at Stationers Hall.

## P R E F A C E.

AS every son and daughter of Adam must sooner or later *die*, and their bodies be consigned to the gloomy mansions of the *grave*, it is highly necessary, and may be truly profitable, for every one, whether young or old, rich or poor, seriously to reflect on the brevity of life, the certainty of death, and that eternal world, on the brink of which they are hourly standing.

In the following well-known Poem, (written by a clergyman in Edinburgh, and first published in the year 1747) many important admonitions are held out, and solemn truths inculcated, worthy the regard and remembrance of all<sup>1</sup>; most of the characters which mankind sustain in the *present* state, many of the pursuits of men in general while here below, together with the vanity and emptiness of every earthly pleasure and enjoyment, are depicted in the most lively and striking colours<sup>2</sup>.

Let the *young* and *gay* learn hence to be serious, and redeem their time, knowing that *the days are evil*<sup>3</sup>; let the *rich* and *great* learn hence, the folly of ambition and trusting in abundance, knowing that *riches take them-*

---

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hervey, in his *Meditations among the Tombs*, page 59, quotes this poem, and says, as his opinion and recommendation of it, see a *valuable* poem, entitled the *Grave*.—Heron, also, in his 35th Letter on Literature, just published, particularly notices this poem, and takes no small pains to recommend the perusal of it, as a close imitation of Shakespeare's style and manner. See *Letters on Literature*, page 276.

<sup>2</sup> It is divided into *two* parts, to prevent its appearing too long and tedious.

<sup>3</sup> *Ephesians*, xv. 16.



*selves wings and flee away* <sup>4</sup> : Let persons of all ages and stations in life, learn hence the necessity of being always ready for their last great change, knowing *there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge in the GRAVE, whither we are going* <sup>5</sup>.

The Grave has eloquence ; its lectures teach  
In *silence*, louder than divines can *preach* !  
*Hear* what it says — ye sons of *folly* hear,  
It speaks to *you*, lend an *attentive* ear. — *Moore*.

---

Respecting GRAY'S ELEGY, it must be acknowledged, though far from being altogether faultless, it is confessedly interesting, natural, and pathetic, and strongly addresses the tender feelings of every humane and discerning reader.

Dr. Johnson, in his Lives of the Poets, speaking of the works of Mr. Gray, makes the following remarks upon *this* poem :

“ In the character of his Elegy, I rejoice to concur  
“ with the common reader ; for by the common sense of  
“ readers uncorrupted with literary prejudices, after all  
“ the refinements of subtilty, and the dogmatism of  
“ learning, must be finally decided all claim to poetical  
“ honours.

“ The Church-yard abounds with images which find  
“ a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which  
“ every bosom returns an echo. The four stanzas be-

---

<sup>4</sup> Proverbs, xxiii. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Eccles. ix. 10.

“ ginning,



# P R E F A C E.

iii

“ginning, *Yet even these bones,* are to me original; I  
“have never seen the notions in any other place; yet he  
“that reads them here, persuades himself that he has  
“always felt them. Had Gray written often thus, it  
“had been vain to blame, and useless to praise him.”

This Elegy has, doubtless, been much read, and highly  
esteemed<sup>6</sup>, for the smoothness of its numbers, and the  
melancholy pleasure it generally affords to an attentive  
and sympathizing mind: but though said to be written  
in a *church yard*, where even the most gay, thoughtless,  
and inconsiderate, are naturally led to be grave and se-  
rious, it is to be regretted so little appears throughout  
it, to inculcate and enforce those solemn, important,  
and interesting reflections, a walk among the *tombs* is  
peculiarly calculated to suggest, respecting *death* and a  
*future state*<sup>7</sup>.

Should the occasional notes now first added to these  
much admired poems, prove entertaining and instruc-  
tive, and make them more useful, edifying, and accepta-  
ble, especially to *younger* minds, the Editor's wishes will  
be fully gratified.

Nov. 3, 1785.

G. WRIGHT.

---

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Johnson styles it, the *far-fam'd* Elegy in a Church yard.

<sup>7</sup> The man how blest! who, sick of *gaudy* scenes,  
(Scenes apt to thrust between us and ourselves)  
Is led by *choice* to take his fav'rite walk  
Beneath Death's gloomy, silent, cypress shades,  
Unpierc'd by vanity's fantastic ray;  
To read his monuments, to weigh his dust,  
Visit the vaults, and dwell among the tombs.

*Night Thoughts.*

The following extract from an elegiac poem on the death of Mr. Gray, written by a sympathizing friend, being an imitation of, and alluding to the ensuing Elegy, may not improperly accompany it.

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

'Tis done, 'tis done — the iron hand of pain,  
With ruthless fury and corrosive force,  
Racks ev'ry joint, and seizes every vein;  
He sinks, he groans, he falls a lifeless corse<sup>8</sup>.

Thus fades the flow'r, nipp'd by the frozen gale,  
Tho' once so sweet, so lovely to the eye;  
Thus the tall oaks, when boist'rous storms assail,  
Torn from the earth, a mighty ruin lie.

Ye sacred sisters of the plaintive verse,  
Now let the stream of fond affection flow;  
O pay your tribute o'er the slow-drawn hearse,  
With all the manly dignity of woe.

Oft when the curfew tolls its parting knell<sup>9</sup>,  
With solemn pause yon church-yard's gloom survey,  
While sorrow's sighs, and tears of pity tell,  
How just the moral of the poet's lay.

O'er his lone grave, in Contemplation's guise,  
Oft let the pilgrim drop a silent tear;  
Oft let the shepherd's tender accents rise,  
Big with the sweets of each revolving year.

---

<sup>8</sup> Mr. Gray died at Cambridge in a convulsion fit, July 31, 1771, ætat. 55.

<sup>9</sup> See the beginning of this Elegy.



THE  
ARGUMENT.  
GRAVE.

PART THE FIRST.

---

*It is appointed unto men once to die,  
And after death the judgement.*

---



## THE ARGUMENT.

*The Author's choice of his subject; Invocation, address to the Almighty; the Grave described; an ancient country church pourtrayed; ghosts make their appearance; a school-boy passing through a church yard by moon light, finely depicted; the tombs visited by a widow; apostrophe address to the Grave; the sweets of friendship; mortifying questions to human pride; embalming the dead, and pompous funerals, cruel irony; an address to undertakers, commonly called death hunters; time destroys all the works of men; the grave buries all distinctions; the frailty of beauteous charms; strength overcome by sickness; philosophers, orators, and physicians, alike subdued by all-conquering Death; the miser, a truly despicable character; covetousness, its dreadful effects; the vanity of riches; the departure of a thoughtless soul awfully represented; the solemnity of death, with suitable and interesting reflections.*

T H E  
G R A V E.

---

O ye timorous souls ! that are terrified at the sound of the passing bell ; that turn pale at the sight of an opened *grave* ; and scarce behold a *coffin* or a *scull* without a shuddering horror ; cry mightily to the Father of your spirits for *faith* in his dear Son <sup>10</sup>.—*Hervey's Meditations.*

---

W HILE some affect the sun, and some the shade,  
Some flee the city, some the hermitage <sup>11</sup> ;  
Their aims as various, as the roads they take  
In journeying thro' life ;—the task be mine,  
To paint the gloomy horrors of the TOMB ; 5  
Th' appointed place of rendezvous, where all  
These travellers meet <sup>12</sup>.—Thy succours I implore,  
Eternal King ! whose potent arm sustains  
The keys of hell and death <sup>13</sup>. — The GRAVE, dread  
thing !  
Men shiver when thou'rt nam'd : Nature appall'd, 10

---

<sup>10</sup> 'Tis faith disarms destruction —  
*Believe*, and shew the reason of a man ;  
*Believe*, and taste the pleasure of a god ;  
*Believe*, and look with triumph in the tomb.

*Night Thoughts.*

<sup>11</sup> The poet here evidently refers to the various subjects (particularly *public* and *private* life, *solitude* and *society*, the *town* and *country*) which *have* been, or *still are* celebrated by poetic writers.

<sup>12</sup> Job, xxx. 23.

<sup>13</sup> Rev. i. 18.



Shakes off her wonted firmness.—Ah! how dark  
 Thy long-extended realms, and rueful wastes!  
 Where naught but Silence reigns, and Night, dark Night,  
 Dark as was CHAOS, ere the infant sun  
 Was roll'd together, or had try'd his beams 15  
 Athwart the gloom profound.—The sickly taper,  
 By glimm'ring thro' thy low-brow'd misty vaults,  
 (Furr'd round with mouldy damps, and ropy slime,)  
 Lets fall a supernumerary horror,  
 And only serves to make thy night more irksome. 20  
 Well do I know thee by thy trusty YEW,  
 Cheerless, unsocial plant <sup>14</sup>! that loves to dwell  
 'Midst sculls and coffins, epitaphs and worms:  
 Where light-heel'd ghosts, and visionary shades,  
 Beneath the wan, cold moon (as fame reports) 25  
 Embod'y'd, thick, perform their mystic rounds <sup>15</sup>.  
 No other merriment, dull tree! is thine.

SEE yonder hallow'd Fane;—the pious work  
 Of names once fam'd, now dubious or forgot,  
 And bury'd midst the wreck of things which were; 30  
 There lie interr'd the more illustrious dead <sup>16</sup>.

---

<sup>14</sup> Many country church yards have yew trees planted in them. Various reasons are assigned for this custom; one of the most probable is, this tree being an *evergreen*, may in some respect be esteemed no unfit emblem of the immortality of the soul, as it never dies.

<sup>15</sup> How populous! how vital is the grave!—

This is creation's melancholy vault;

The vale funereal, the sad cypress gloom;

The land of apparitions, empty shades!—*Night Thoughts*.

Now melancholy spectres visit the ruins of ancient monasteries, and frequent the solitary mansions of the dead.—*Hervey on the Night*.

<sup>16</sup> I pore upon the inscriptions, and am just able to pick out, that these are the remains of the rich and the renown'd; no vulgar dead are deposited here. *Hervey on the Tombs*.

The wind is up :—hark ! how it howls !—Methinks,  
 Till now, I never heard a sound so dreary :  
 Doors creek, and windows clap, and night's foul bird<sup>17</sup>,  
 Rook'd in the spire, screams loud ; the gloomy isles 35  
 Black plaster'd, and hung round with shreds of 'scut-  
 cheons,

And tatter'd coats of arms, send back the sound,  
 Laden with heavier airs, from the low vaults,  
 The mansions of the dead.—Rous'd from their slumbers,  
 In grim array the grisly spectres rise, 40  
 Grin horrible, and, obstinately fullen,  
 Pass and repass, hush'd as the foot of Night<sup>18</sup>.  
 Again the screech owl shrieks — ungracious sound !  
 I'll hear no more ; it makes one's blood run chill.

QUITE round the pile, a row of reverend elms, 45  
 (Coæval near with that) all ragged shew,  
 Long lash'd by the rude winds<sup>19</sup>. Some rift half down  
 Their branchless trunks ; others so thin at top,  
 That scarce two crows can lodge in the same tree.  
 Strange things, the neighbours say, have happen'd here ;  
 Wild shrieks have issu'd from the hollow tombs<sup>20</sup> ; 51  
 Dead men have come again, and walk'd about ;  
 And the great bell has toll'd unring, untouch'd.

<sup>17</sup> The screechowl chiefly frequents old ruined buildings, and is often heard among the walls of ancient country churches.

<sup>18</sup> Now dreary forms, in fullen state, stalk along the gloom ; or, swifter than lightning, glide along the shade ; they pass and repass in unsubstantial images, along the forsaken galleries, or take their determined stand over some lamented grave.—*Hervey on the Night*.

<sup>19</sup> See an elegant description of a country church in the *Beauties of Hervey*, just published.

<sup>20</sup> Now voices more than mortal are heard from the echoing vaults, and groans issue from the hollow tombs.—*Ibid.*



(Such tales their cheer at wake or gossiping,  
When it draws near to witching time of night.) 55

OFt in the lone church yard at night I've seen,  
By glimpse of moonshine chequering thro' the trees,  
The school boy, with his satchel in his hand,  
Whistling aloud to bear his courage up,  
And lightly tripping o'er the long flat stones, 60  
(With nettles skirted, and with moss o'ergrown,)  
That tell in homely phrase who lie below <sup>21</sup>.  
Sudden he starts, and hears, or *thinks* he hears,  
The sound of something purring at his heels <sup>22</sup>;  
Full fast he flies, and dares not look behind him, 65  
Till, out of breath, he overtakes his fellows,  
Who gather round, and wonder at the tale  
Of horrid APPARITION, tall and ghastly,  
That walks at dead of night, or takes his stand  
O'er some new-open'd grave; and (strange to tell!) 70  
Evanishes at crowing of the cock <sup>23</sup>.

THE new-made WIDOW, too, I've sometimes 'spy'd,  
Sad sight! slow moving o'er the prostrate dead:  
Listless, she crawls along in doleful black,  
While bursts of sorrow gush from either eye, 75  
Fast falling down her now untasted cheek.  
Prone on the lowly grave of the dear man  
She drops; whilst busy meddling Memory,

---

<sup>21</sup> Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect,  
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,  
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deckt,  
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh. — *Gray's Elegy*.

<sup>22</sup> See the frontispiece.

<sup>23</sup> The above description has met with universal approbation, and is doubtless one of the most natural and pleasing pictures throughout the whole poem.

## THE GRAVE.

11

In barbarous succession, musters up  
 The past endearments of their softer hours <sup>24</sup>, 80  
 Tenacious of its theme. Still, still she thinks  
 She sees him, and indulging the fond thought,  
 Clings yet more closely to the senseless turf,  
 Nor heeds the passenger who looks that way <sup>25</sup>.

INVIDIOUS GRAVE!—how dost thou rend in sunder  
 Whom love has knit, and sympathy made one? 86  
 A tie more stubborn far than Nature's band.

FRIENDSHIP! mysterious cement of the soul <sup>26</sup>;  
 Sweetner of life, and folder <sup>27</sup> of society,  
 I owe thee much. Thou hast deserv'd from me, 90  
 Far, far beyond what I can ever pay.  
 Oft have I prov'd the labours of thy love,  
 And the warm efforts of the gentle heart,  
 Anxious to please.—Oh! when my friend and I  
 In some thick wood have wander'd heedless on, 95  
 Hid from the vulgar eye, and sat us down

<sup>24</sup> The following sentiments in a late publication entitled, *The Guide to Domestic Happiness*, may serve as an illustration of the poet's description of a widow's grief: "When a husband is carried to the grave, we at once find excuses for every weakness, and palliations of every fault; we recollect a thousand endearments, which before glided off our minds without impression; a thousand favours unrepaid; a thousand duties unperformed; and wish, vainly wish, for his return, not so much that we may receive as bestow happiness."

<sup>25</sup> Dr. Young happily expresses the poignant grief of surviving relatives on the death of those they dearly loved, by saying,  
 When such friends part, 'tis the survivor dies.

*Night Thoughts.*

<sup>26</sup> A gen'rous friendship no cold medium knows,  
 Burns with one love, with one resentment glows;  
 One should our int'rests and our passions be;  
 My friend must hate the man that injures me.

*Pope's Homer.*

<sup>27</sup> Uniter, or strengthener. See *Johnson's Dictionary*.



Upon the sloping cowslip-cover'd bank,  
 Where the pure limpid stream has slid along  
 In grateful errors thro' the underwood,  
 Sweet murmuring ; methought the shrill-tongu'd thrush  
 Mended his song of love ; the sooty blackbird 101  
 Mellow'd his pipe, and soften'd ev'ry note :  
 The eglantine smell'd sweeter, and the rose  
 Assum'd a dye more deep ; whilst ev'ry flower  
 Vy'd with its fellow-plant in luxury 105  
 Of dress—Oh ! then the longest summer's day  
 Seem'd too too much in haste ; still the full heart  
 Had not imparted half : 'twas happiness  
 Too exquisite to last <sup>28</sup>. Of joys departed,  
 Not to return, how painful the remembrance ! 110

DULL GRAVE !—thou spoil'st the dance of youthful  
 blood,  
 Strik'st out the dimple from the cheek of Mirth,  
 And ev'ry smirking feature from the face ;  
 Branding out LAUGHTER with the name of MADNESS.  
 Where are the JESTERS now ? the men of health, 115  
 Complectionally pleasant ? Where's the DROLL,  
 Whose ev'ry look and gesture was a joke  
 To clapping theatres and shouting crowds,  
 And made ev'n thick-lip'd musing Melancholy  
 To gather up her face into a smile 120

<sup>28</sup> Dr. Young, speaking of the happiness of true friendship,  
 thus expresses himself :

*Celestial happiness* : whene'er she stoops  
 To visit earth, *one* shrine the goddess finds,  
 And *one alone*, to make her sweet amends  
 For absent *heaven* — the *bosom* of a friend ;  
 Where heart *meets* heart, *reciprocally* soft,  
 Each other's pillow to repose *divine*. — *Night Thoughts*.

Before she was aware? Ah! fullen now,  
And dumb as the green turf that covers them <sup>29</sup>.

WHERE are the mighty thunderbolts of war?  
The ROMAN CÆSARS, and the GRECIAN CHIEFS,  
The boast of story? Where the hot-brain'd youth; <sup>123</sup>  
Who the TIARA at his pleasure tore  
From Kings of all the then discover'd globe,  
And cry'd, forsooth, because his arm was hamper'd,  
And had not room enough to do its work?  
Alas! how slim, dishonourably slim, <sup>130</sup>  
And cram'd into a space we blush to name!  
Proud ROYALTY! how alter'd in thy looks!  
How blank thy features, and how wan thy hue <sup>30</sup>!  
SON OF THE MORNING! whither art thou gone?  
Where hast thou hid thy many-spangled head, <sup>135</sup>  
And the majestic menace of thine eyes  
Felt from afar? Pliant and powerless now,  
Like new-born infant wound up in his swathes,  
Or victim tumbled flat upon its back,  
That throbs beneath the sacrificer's knife <sup>31</sup>. <sup>140</sup>  
Mute, must thou bear the strife of little tongues,  
And coward insults of the base-born crowd,  
That grudge a privilege thou never hadst,  
But only hop'd for in the peaceful GRAVE,

<sup>29</sup> Say, ye gay candidates for comic scenes,  
Where are your mimic *Foots* and *Shuters* now,  
Who lately kept your features in a grin?

<sup>30</sup> I thank you, ye relics of sounding titles and magnificent names; ye have taught me more of the littleness of the world than all the volumes of my library: your nobility arrayed in a winding sheet, your grandeur mouldering in an urn, are the most indisputable proofs of the *nothingness* of all created things.

*Hervey on the Tombs.*

<sup>31</sup> The lamb.



Of being unmolested and alone <sup>32</sup>. 145  
 ARABIA's gums and odoriferous drugs <sup>33</sup>,  
 And honours by the HERALDS duly paid,  
 In mode and form ev'n to a very scruple;  
 Oh! cruel IRONY! these come too late,  
 And only mock whom they were meant to honour. 150  
 Surely there's not a dungeon slave that's bury'd  
 In the highway, unshrouded and uncoffin'd,  
 But lies as soft, and sleeps as sound as he <sup>34</sup>.  
 Sorry pre-eminence of high descent,  
 Above the vulgar born, to rot in state <sup>35</sup>. 155

BUT see! the well-plum'd HEARSE comes nodding on  
 Stately and slow <sup>36</sup>; and properly attended  
 By the whole fable tribe, that painful watch  
 The sick man's door, and live upon the dead,  
 By letting out their persons by the hour, 160  
 To mimic sorrow, where the heart's not sad.  
 How rich the trappings! now they're all unfurl'd,  
 And glittering in the sun; triumphant entries

<sup>32</sup> *Here the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.* Job, iii. 17.

<sup>33</sup> The poet here alludes to the Ægyptian method of embalming the dead.

<sup>34</sup> In this house appointed for all living, the servant was equally accommodated and lodged in the same story with his master; the poor indigent lay as softly, and slept as soundly, as the most opulent possessor. — *Hervey's Meditations.*

<sup>35</sup> Dr. Young happily expresses the vanity and emptiness of all human grandeur in the following beautiful lines, well adapted for a general inscription on the tombs of the rich and great:

Earth's highest station ends in, *here he lies*;  
 And *dust to dust*, concludes her noblest song.

*Night Thoughts.*

<sup>36</sup> Dr. Watts, in his Elegy on Mr. Gunston, thus elegantly describes the appearance of the plume-decked hearse:

Solemn and slow it moves unto the tomb,  
 While weighty sorrows nod on every plume.

# THE GRAVE.

15

Of Conquerors, and Coronation pomps,  
 In glory scarce exceed. Great gluts of people 165  
 Retard th' unwieldy show: whilst from the casements  
 And houses' tops, ranks behind ranks, close wedg'd,  
 Hang bellying o'er. But tell us, why this waste,  
 Why this ado in earthing up a carcase  
 That's fall'n into disgrace, and in the nostril 170  
 Smells horrible <sup>37</sup>? — Ye UNDERTAKERS, tell us,  
 'Midst all the gorgeous figures you exhibit,  
 Why is the *principal* conceal'd, for which  
 You make this mighty stir? — 'Tis wisely done:  
 What would offend the eye in a good picture, 175  
 The painter casts discreetly into shades.

PROUD LINEAGE, now how little thou appear'st  
 Below the envy of the private man!  
 HONOUR, that meddlesome, officious ill,  
 Pursues thee e'en to death; nor there stops short; 180  
 Strange persecution! when the GRAVE itself  
 Is no protection from rude sufferance.

ABSURD to think to overreach the GRAVE,  
 And from the wreck of names to rescue ours.  
 The best concerted scheme men lay for fame 185  
 Die fast away; only *themselves* die faster.  
 The far-fam'd SCULPTOR, and the laurell'd BARD,  
 Those bold insurers of deathless fame,  
 Supply their little feeble aids in vain <sup>38</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> *Pompous* funerals are as *ridiculous* as they are *unnecessary*; ridiculous in respect to the *living*, except in the views of those who reap *pecuniary* advantage from them, and unnecessary respecting the *dead*, who are the principal subject and occasions of them.

<sup>38</sup> Praises on tombs are titles vainly spent;  
 A man's *good name* is his *best* monument.



The tapering PYRAMID, th' ÆGYPTIAN's pride, 190  
 And wonder of the world, whose spiky top  
 Has wounded the thick cloud, and long outliv'd  
 The angry shaking of the winter's storm;  
 Yet spent at last by th' injuries of heaven,  
 Shatter'd with age, and furrow'd o'er with years, 195  
 The mystic cone with hieroglyphics crusted,  
 At once gives way<sup>39</sup>. Oh! lamentable sight!  
 The labour of whole ages tumbles down,  
 A hideous and mishapen length of ruins<sup>40</sup>.  
 Sepuchral columns wrestle but in vain  
 With all-subduing Time; her cank'ring hand  
 With calm, delib'rate malice wasteth them<sup>41</sup>:  
 Worn on the edge of days, the brass consumes,  
 The busto moulders, and the deep-cut marble,  
 Unsteady to the steel, gives up its charge. 205  
 AMBITION, half convicted of her folly,  
 Hangs down the head, and reddens at the tale<sup>42</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> Amidst the general wreck of all the works of men, this thought should strike us:

*Virtue alone outbuilds the pyramids;*

*Her monuments shall last, when Egypt's fall. — Night Thoughts.*

<sup>40</sup> Sic transit gloria mundi.

<sup>41</sup> Well might Shakespeare say, and have it engraven on his monument, as a proof of the instability of all human things,

*The cloud-capt towers,*

*The gorgeous palaces,*

*The solemn temples,*

*The great globe itself,*

*Yea, all that it inherits,*

*Shall dissolve,*

*And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,*

*Leave not a wreck behind.*

<sup>42</sup> \*\*\*\*\* Death is victory;

*It binds in chains the raging ills of life;*

*Lust and ambition, wrath and avarice,*

*Dragg'd at his chariot wheels, applaud his power.*

*Night Thoughts.*

HERE

HERE all the mighty TROUBLERS OF THE EARTH,  
 Who swam to sov'reign rule thro' seas of blood ;  
 Th' oppressive, sturdy, man-destroying Villains, 210  
 Who ravag'd kingdoms, and laid empires waste,  
 And, in a cruel wantonness of power,  
 Thinn'd states of half their people, and gave up  
 To want the rest ; now, like a storm that's spent,  
 Lie hush'd <sup>43</sup>, and meanly sneak behind the covert <sup>44</sup>.  
 Vain thought ! to hide them from the gen'ral scorn 216  
 That haunts and doggs them like an injur'd ghost  
 Implacable.—Here, too, the PETTY TYRANT,  
 Whose scant domains GEOGRAPHER ne'er notic'd,  
 And, well for neighbouring grounds, of arm as short,  
 Who fix'd his iron talons on the poor, 221  
 And grip'd them like some lordly beast of prey ;  
 Deaf to the forceful cries of gnawing Hunger,  
 And piteous plaintive voice of Misery ;  
 (As if a SLAVE was not a shred of nature, 225  
 Of the same common nature with his LORD ;)  
 Now tame and humble, like a child that's whip'd,  
 Shakes hands with dust, and calls the worm his kins-  
 man <sup>45</sup> ;  
 Nor pleads his rank and birthright. Under ground,  
 PRECEDENCY's a jest ; Vassal and Lord, 230  
 Grossly familiar, side by side consume. <sup>46</sup>.

WHEN

<sup>43</sup> Mors sola fatetur

Quantula sunt hominum corpuscula. — *Juv.*

<sup>44</sup> Where are the *Alexanders* and *Cæsars*, so-fam'd for conquest once ? Where are they now ? —

Nature provides for *all* one common grave,  
 The last retreat of the distress'd and brave.

<sup>45</sup> The Grave unites, there e'en the Great find rest,  
 And blended lie th' oppressor and th' oppress'd. — *Pope.*

<sup>46</sup> The following lines, as an antidote against *pride*, are very expressive, and worthy to be remembered and attended to by all :



WHEN self-esteem, or other's adulation,  
 Would cunningly persuade us we are something  
 Above the common level of our kind,  
 The *Grave* gainsays the smooth-complection'd flattery,  
 And with blunt truth acquaints us what we are <sup>47</sup>. 236

BEAUTY—thou pretty plaything, dear deceit!  
 That steals so softly o'er the stripling's heart,  
 And gives it a new pulse unknown before,  
 The *Grave* discredits thee <sup>48</sup>: thy charms expung'd, 240  
 Thy roses faded, and thy lilies soil'd,  
 What hast thou more to boast of <sup>49</sup>? Will thy lovers  
 Flock round thee now, to gaze and do thee homage <sup>50</sup>?  
 Methinks I see thee with thy head now laid,  
 Whilst surfeited upon thy damask cheek 245  
 The high-fed *Worm*, in lazy volumes roll'd,  
 Riots unscar'd.—For *this* was all thy caution?

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I dreamt, that buried with my fellow clay,  
 Close by a common *Beggar's* side I lay;  
 And as so mean an object shock'd my pride,  
 Thus like a corpse of consequence, I cry'd,  
*Scoundrel!* begone, and henceforth touch me not,  
 More manners learn, and at a distance rot.  
*Scoundrel!* then, with an haughtier tone cried he,  
 Proud lump of earth! I scorn thy words and thee;  
 Here all are equal, now thy case is mine,  
 This is my rotting-place, and that is thine.

<sup>47</sup> Well might Job exclaim, upon reflecting on the shortness  
 and uncertainty of human life, and the frailty of man; *I have*  
*said to corruption, thou art my father; to the worm, thou art my*  
*mother and my sister.* Job, xvii. 14.

<sup>48</sup> *Forma bonum fragile est.*—Ovid.

<sup>49</sup> On beauteous charms no more, ye Fair! depend,  
 The grave does all, without distinction, blend;  
 All press alike to that same goal the tomb,  
 Where wrinkled *Laura* smiles at *Chloe's bloom*.

<sup>50</sup> See Hervey's address to *Florella*, in his *Meditations among*  
*the Tombs*, Vol. I. p. 48.

For

For this thy painful labours at thy glass<sup>51</sup>,  
 To improve those charms, and keep them in repair,  
 For which the spoiler thanks thee not<sup>52</sup>? Foul feeder!  
 Coarse fare and carrion please thee full as well, 251  
 And leave as keen a relish on the sense.  
 Look how the fair one weeps!—the conscious tears  
 Stand thick as dew drops on the bells of flow'rs:  
 Honest effusion! the swollen heart in vain 255  
 Works hard, to put a gloss on its distress.

STRENGTH, too—thou furly and less gentle boast  
 Of those that loud laugh at the village ring,  
 A fit of common sickness pulls thee down  
 With greater ease than e'er thou didst the stripling 260  
 That rashly dar'd thee to th' unequal fight.—  
 What groan was that I heard?—Deep groan, indeed!  
 With anguish heavy laden.—Let me trace it.—  
 From yonder bed it comes, where the strong man,  
 By stronger arm belabour'd, grasps for breath 265  
 Like a hard-hunted beast. How his great heart  
 Beats thick! his roomy breast by far too scant  
 To give the lungs full play.—What now avail  
 The strong-built, finewy limbs, and well-spread shoulders!  
 See how he tugs for life, and lays about him, 270  
 Mad with his pains!—Eager he catches hold

<sup>51</sup> Ye blooming virgins, beautiful and fair,  
 To yonder mould'ring place of skulls repair,  
 And learn how frail the charms of beauty are.

*Solitary Walks*

<sup>52</sup> Learn hence, ye lively and engaging Fair,  
 To make your *minds* your chief and greatest care;  
 For death ere long will close the brightest eyes,  
 But heav'n-born *Virtue* never, *never* dies.

*Rural Christian*



Of what comes next to hand, and grasps it hard,  
 Just like a creature drowning; hideous fight!  
 Oh! how his eyes stand out, and stare full ghastly!  
 Whilst the distemper's rank and deadly venom 275  
 Shoots like a burning arrow cross his bowels,  
 And drinks his marrow up.—Heard you that groan?  
 It was his last.—See how the great GOLIATH,  
 Just like a child that brawl'd itself to rest,  
 Lies still <sup>53</sup>.—What mean'st thou then, O mighty  
     Boaster, 280  
 To vaunt of nerves of thine? What means the Bull,  
 Unconscious of his strength, to play the coward,  
 And flee before a feeble thing like man,  
 That, knowing well the slackness of his arm,  
 Trusts only in the well-invented knife? 285

WITH STUDY pale, and midnight vigils spent,  
 The star-surveying SAGE close to his eye  
 Applies the sight-invigorating Tube <sup>54</sup>,  
 And travelling through the boundless length of space,  
 Marks well the courses of the far-seen orbs 290  
 That roll with regular confusion there,  
 In ecstasy of thought. But ah! proud Man!  
 Great heights are hazardous to the weak head;  
 Soon, very soon, thy firmest footing fails;  
 And down thou drop'st into that darksome place, 295  
 Where NOR DEVICE NOR KNOWLEDGE ever came <sup>55</sup>.

HERE the TONGUE-WARRIOR lies disabled now,  
 Disarm'd, dishonour'd, like a wretch that's gagg'd,

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<sup>53</sup> Well does a late celebrated writer say respecting death,—  
 So strong is the tyrant's arm, that nothing can resist its force; so  
 true his aim, that nothing can elude the blow.

*Hervey's Meditations among the Tombs.*

<sup>54</sup> The Telescope.

<sup>55</sup> Eccles. ix. 10.

# THE GRAVE.

21

And cannot tell his ails to passers by.  
Great men of language <sup>56</sup>! — Whence this mighty  
change; 300  
This dumb despair, and drooping of the head?  
Tho' strong Persuasion hung upon thy lip,  
And sly Infination's softer arts  
In ambush lay upon thy flowing tongue;  
Alas! how chop-fall'n now? Thick mists and silence 305  
Rest, like a weary cloud, upon thy breast  
Unceasing.—Ah! where is the lifted arm,  
The strength of action, and the force of words,  
The well-turn'd period, and the well-tun'd voice,  
With all the lesser ornaments of phrase? 310  
Ah! fled for ever, as they ne'er had been;  
Raz'd from the book of Fame; or, more provoking,  
Perchance some hackney, hunger-bitten Scribbler,  
Insults thy memory, and blots thy tomb  
With long flat narrative, or duller rhymes, 315  
With heavy halting pace that drawl along;  
Enough to rouse a dead man into rage,  
And warm with red resentment the wan cheek <sup>57</sup>.

HERE the great masters of the HEALING-ART,  
These mighty mock defrauders of the TOMB, 320  
Spite of their JULEPS and CATHOLICONS,  
Resign their fate.—Proud ÆSCULAPIUS' son <sup>58</sup>!  
Where are thy boasted implements of Art,  
And all thy well-cram'd magazines of Health?

<sup>56</sup> Orators.

<sup>57</sup> Too many epitaphs, both in prose and verse, are to be met with upon tomb stones, as illiterate and unmeaning as others are ridiculous and adulatory.

<sup>58</sup> An apostrophe to deceased physicians, founded on that common maxim, *Physician, heal thyself*.



Nor hill, nor vale, as far as ships could go, 325  
 Nor margin of the gravel-bottom'd brook,  
 Escap'd thy rifling hand: — from stubborn shrubs  
 Thou wrung'st their shy-retiring virtues out,  
 And vex'd them in the fire; nor fly, nor insect,  
 Nor writhy snake, escap'd thy deep research. 330  
 But why this APPARATUS? Why this cost?  
 Tell us, thou doughty keeper from the GRAVE,  
 Where are thy RECIPES and CORDIALS now,  
 With the long list of vouchers for thy cures?<sup>59</sup>  
 Alas! thou speak'st not.—The bold impostor 335  
 Looks not more silly when the cheat's found out.

HERE the lank MISER, worst of felons,  
 Who meanly stole, (discreditable shift,)  
 From back and belly too, their proper cheer,  
 Eas'd of a task it irk'd the wretch to pay 340  
 To his own carcase, now lies cheaply lodg'd,  
 By clam'rous Appetites no longer teaz'd,  
 Nor tedious bills of charges and repairs.  
 But ah! where are his rents, his comings-in?  
 Ay! now you've made the rich man poor indeed<sup>60</sup>? 345  
 ROBB'D OF HIS GODS, what has he left behind?  
 Oh, cursed lust of Gold! when for thy sake,

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<sup>59</sup> In vain physicians strive to save  
 Themselves or patients from the grave;  
 In vain we court the doctor's art  
 To ward off Death's unerring dart:  
 For, as death came thro' Adam's fall,  
 So death must be the lot of all. —

Romans, v. 12.

<sup>60</sup> Here terminate *Ambition's* airy schemes,  
 The syren *Pleasure* here allures no more;  
 Here grov'ling *Avarice* drops her golden dreams,  
 And life's fantastic trifles all are o'er.

The fool throws up his int'rest in *both* worlds :  
First starv'd in this, then damn'd in that to come <sup>61</sup>.

How shocking must thy summons be, O DEATH ! 350  
To him that is at ease in his possessions ;  
Who counting on long years of pleasure here,  
Is quite unfurnish'd for that world to come <sup>62</sup> !  
In that dread moment, how the frantic Soul  
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement ! 355

Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help,  
But shrieks in vain ! — How wishfully she looks  
On all she's leaving, now no longer her's !  
A little longer, yet a *little* longer,  
Oh ! might she stay to wash away her stains, 360  
And fit her for her passage. — Mournful sight !  
Her very eyes weep blood ; and every groan  
She heaves is big with horror. — But the Foe,  
Like a staunch murd'rer, steady to his purpose,  
Pursues her close through every lane of life, 365  
Nor misses once the track, but presses on ;  
Till forc'd at last to the tremendous verge,  
At once she sinks to everlasting ruin <sup>63</sup>.

SURE 'tis a serious thing to DIE ! My soul !  
What a strange moment must it be, when near 370  
Thy journey's end, thou hast the gulf in view !  
That awful gulf, no mortal e'er repass'd

<sup>61</sup> The sacred scriptures declare, *the love of money is the root of all evil*, and that *covetousness is idolatry*. 1. Tim. vi. 10. Colos. iii. 5.

<sup>62</sup> Read the history of the rich man, spoken of in Luke xii. 16—20.

<sup>63</sup> The above representation of a departing soul is truly pathetic and sublime, and deservedly quoted by the late Rev. Mr. Hervey in his *Meditations*, page 59.



To tell what's doing on the other side.  
 Nature runs back, and shudders at the sight <sup>64</sup>;  
 And every life string bleeds at thoughts of parting; 375  
 For part they must; BODY and SOUL must part:  
 Fond couple! link'd more close than wedded pair.  
 THIS wings its way to its Almighty Source,  
 The Witness of its actions, now its Judge <sup>65</sup>;  
 THAT drops into the dark and noisome GRAVE, 380  
 Like a disabled pitcher of no use <sup>66</sup>.

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<sup>64</sup> 'Tis not the stoick's lesson, got by rote,  
 The pomp of words and pedant dissertation,  
 That can support thee in that hour of terror:  
 Books have taught cowards to talk nobly of it;  
 But when the trial comes, they start, and stand aghast.

*Rowe's Fair Penitent.*

<sup>65</sup> ACTS xvii. 31.

Dr. Watts's meditations on the dissolution of the body are happily expressed in the following lines:

And must this body die?  
 This mortal frame decay?  
 And must these active limbs of mine  
 Lie mould'ring in the clay?  
 Corruption, earth, and worms,  
 Shall but refine this flesh,  
 Till my triumphat spirit comes  
 To put it on afresh.  
 God, my Redeemer, lives,  
 And often from the skies  
 Looks down, and watches all my dust,  
 Till he shall bid it rise. — *Hymn 110. book II.*

<sup>66</sup> How low and inferior is the author's simile respecting the lifeless body to that of St. Paul's, in I. Cor. xv. 42, 43. — *It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory.*

THE  
G R A V E.

PART THE SECOND.

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*As the tree falleth, there it shall lie;*

*As death leaves, judgement will find us.*

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## THE ARGUMENT.

*Annihilation an absurdity, encourages the blackest crimes; Suicide, and its dreadful consequences; true bravery consists in patiently waiting till our change comes; the state of the dead a secret; description of a sexton, or grave-digger; his thoughtlessness and inconsideration, a pitiable circumstance; the folly of the living in not considering their latter end; the swiftness and secrecy of time; the world described; death the common lot of all; rich and poor of every age and nation alike subject to its stroke; the happiness of Adam before his fall; the shortness of it; sin the origin of every evil in the world; death represented as an insatiable glutton; the grave described; the resurrection of the dead; Christ's resurrection, a pledge of ours; the folly of meeting death with reluctance; the end of a good man happily portrayed; conclusion.*

## G R A V E.

All is steadfast and immoveable beyond the Grave; whether we are then seated on the throne, or stretched on the rack; a seal will be set to our condition, by the hand of everlasting Mercy, or inflexible Justice. — *Hervey's Meditations.*

**I**F DEATH was nothing, and nought AFTER DEATH;  
If when men dy'd at once they ceas'd to be,  
Returning to the barren womb of Nothing,  
Whence first they sprung, then might the Debauchee 385  
Untrembling mouth the Heav'ns <sup>67</sup>: — Then might the  
Drunkard

Reel over his full bowl, and, when 'tis drain'd,  
Fill up another to the brim, and laugh  
At the poor bugbear DEATH: — Then might the wretch  
That's weary of the world, and tir'd of life, 390  
At once give each inquietude the slip,  
By stealing out of being when he pleas'd,  
And by what way; whether by hemp or steel.  
DEATH'S THOUSAND DOORS stand open. Who could  
force  
The ill-pleas'd guest to sit out his full time, 395  
Or blame him if he goes? — Sure he does well,

<sup>67</sup> See Dr. Young's soliloquy on the supposition of annihilation, in his Night Thoughts, Night 7, line 653.



That helps himself as timely as he can,  
 When able. — But if there is an *HEREAFTER* <sup>68</sup>,  
 And that there is, Conscience, uninfluenc'd  
 And suffer'd to speak out, tells ev'ry man, 400  
 Then must it be an awful thing to *DIE* :  
 More horrid yet to die by one's *own* hand.

*SELF-MURDER* ! — name it not : our island's shame ;  
 That makes her the reproach of neighbouring states.  
 Shall Nature, swerving from her earliest dictate, 405  
 Self-preservation, fall by her *own* act ?  
 Forbid it, Heaven. — Let not, upon disgust,  
 The shameless hand be fully crimson'd o'er  
 With blood of its own lord. — Dreadful attempt !  
 Just reeking from self-slaughter, in a rage 410  
 To rush into the presence of our Judge ;  
 As if we challeng'd him to do his worst,  
 And matter'd not his wrath <sup>69</sup> : — Unheard-of tortures  
 Must be reserv'd for such : these herd together ;  
 The *common* damn'd shun their society <sup>70</sup>, 415  
 And look upon themselves as Fiends less foul.  
 Our time is fix'd, and all our days are number'd <sup>71</sup> ;  
 How long, how short, we know not : — this we know,  
 Duty requires we calmly wait the summons,

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<sup>68</sup> Addison very justly observes in his tragedy of *Cato*,  
 'Tis *Heav'n* itself points out an *hereafter*,  
 And intimates *Eternity* to *Man*.

<sup>69</sup> Suicide is doubtless a crime of the *deepest* dye ; for as we did  
 not bring ourselves *into* being, we have no right to hurry ourselves  
*out* of it. He only who created us, has a just authority to destroy  
 us, if he sees fit. Vide *Herries's Address on Suicide*.

<sup>70</sup> The poet here, endeavouring to paint self-murder in the  
 blackest colours, indulges a false idea of wicked spirits in hell ;  
 as if some esteemed themselves *better* than others, which the scrip-  
 tures no where intimate, or lead us to suppose.

<sup>71</sup> Is there not an appointed time for man upon earth ? — Job,  
 vii. 1. Eccles. iii. 2.

Nor dare to stir till Heav'n shall give permission <sup>72</sup>: 420  
 Like Sent'ries that must keep their destin'd stand,  
 And wait th' appointed hour, till they're reliev'd;  
 Those only are the Brave that keep their ground,  
 And keep it to the last. To run away  
 Is but a coward's trick. To run away 425  
 From this world's ills, that, at the very worst,  
 Will soon blow o'er, thinking to mend ourselves,  
 By boldly vent'ring on a world unknown,  
 And plunging headlong in the dark; — 'tis mad;  
 No phrenzy half so desperate as this <sup>73</sup>. 430

TELL us, ye dead; will none of you, in pity  
 To those you left behind, disclose the secret?  
 Oh! that some courteous ghost would blab it out;  
 What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be <sup>74</sup>.  
 I've heard, that souls departed, have sometimes 435  
 Forewarn'd men of their death: — 'Twas kindly done,  
 To knock, and give th' alarm. — But what means  
 This stinted charity? — 'Tis but lame kindness  
 That does its work by halves. — Why might you not  
 Tell us what 'tis TO DIE? — Do the strict laws 440  
 Of your society forbid your speaking  
 Upon a point so nice? — I'll ask no more:  
 Sullen, like lamps in sepulchres, your shine  
 Enlightens but yourselves. Well — 'tis no matter;

<sup>72</sup> Job, xiv. 14.

<sup>73</sup> Suicides are often, and not improperly, brought in by juries,  
*non compos mentis*.

<sup>74</sup> \* \* \* \* \* No notices they give,  
 Nor tell us where, nor how they live;  
 As if bound up by solemn fate,  
 To keep this secret of their state;  
 To tell their joys nor pains to none,  
 That man might live by *faith* alone.



A very little time will clear up all, 445  
And make us learn'd as you are, and as close.

DEATH's shafts fly thick : here falls the Village swain,  
And there his pamper'd Lord. The cup goes round :  
And who so artful as to put it by <sup>75</sup> !  
'Tis long since DEATH had the majority ; 450  
Yet strange ! THE LIVING LAY IT NOT TO HEART <sup>76</sup> .  
See yonder maker of the dead man's bed,  
The SEXTON, hoary-headed chronicle,  
Of hard, unmeaning face, down which ne'er stole  
A gentle tear, with mattock in his hand, 455  
Digs thro' whole rows of kindred and acquaintance,  
By far his juniors. — Scarce a scull's cast up,  
But well he knew its Owner, and can tell  
Some passage of his life <sup>77</sup> . — Thus hand in hand  
The sot has walk'd with DEATH twice twenty years, 460  
And yet ne'er Yonker on the green laughs louder,  
Or clubs a smuttier tale <sup>78</sup> : — When Drunkards meet,  
None sings a merrier catch, or lends a hand  
More willing to his cup. — Poor wretch ! he minds not,  
That soon some trusty brother of the trade 465  
Shall do for him, what he has done for thousands <sup>79</sup> .  
ON

<sup>75</sup> Death's fatal stroke no mortal can withstand,  
None can elude or stay the tyrant's hand. — *Rural Christian*.

<sup>76</sup> Isa. lviii. 1.

<sup>77</sup> The author here seems to have in view the grave-digger in the tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark.

<sup>78</sup> To have mortality ever before our eyes without thinking of it, is surely the worst stupidity a rational being can discover. Dr. Young seems well assur'd of this truth when he thus expresses himself,

Ah me ! too long I set at nought the swarm  
Of friendly warnings which around me flew ;  
And smil'd unsmitten — small my cause to smile.

*Night Thoughts.*

<sup>79</sup> 'Tis a common and melancholy observation, and too frequently confirmed, that none seem less affected with the thoughts of

ON this side, and on that, men see their friends  
 Drop off, like leaves in autumn <sup>80</sup>; yet launch out  
 Into fantastic schemes, which the long Livers  
 In the world's hale and undegenerate days 470  
 Could scarce have leisure for. — Fools that we are,  
 Never to think of DEATH and of OURSELVES  
 At the same time: as if to learn TO DIE  
 Were no concern of ours <sup>81</sup>. — Oh! more than sottish,  
 For creatures of a day in gamesome mood, 475  
 To frolic on Eternity's dread brink  
 Unapprehensive; when, for aught we know,  
 The very first swollen surge shall sweep us in <sup>82</sup>.  
 Think we, or think we not, TIME hurries on  
 With a resistless, unremitting stream; 480  
 Yet treads more soft than e'er did midnight thief,  
 That slides his hand under the miser's pillow,  
 And carries off his prize <sup>83</sup>. — What is THIS WORLD?  
 What, but a spacious BURIAL-FIELD unwall'd,  
 Strew'd with Death's spoils, the spoils of animals 485  
 Savage and tame, and full of dead men's bones.  
 The very turf on which we tread once liv'd <sup>84</sup>;  
 And we that live must lend our carcases

---

of death, than those who have mortality most frequently presented to their view, such as, *Physicians Undertakers, &c.*

<sup>80</sup> The longer we live, the more reason we shall have to acknowledge and lament this melancholy truth.

<sup>81</sup> Well might Dr. Young in his *Night Thoughts* say,

All men think *all men mortal but themselves.*

Learn to *live well*, that thou mayst *die* so too,

To *live* and *die* is all we have to do. — *Denham.*

<sup>82</sup> Man is like a tenant at will, liable to be (and often is) turned out of his earthly tenement, the body, at a moment's warning; therefore he should make it his daily study to be always ready for the awful summons, agreeable to the admonitions of divine revelation, Mark, xiii. 35, 36, Matthew, xxiv. 44.

<sup>83</sup> Matt. xxv. 13. 2 Pet. iii. 10.

<sup>84</sup> Whole buried towns support the dancer's heel.

*Night Thoughts.*

To



To cover our own offspring : in their turns,  
 They, too, must cover theirs. — 'Tis HERE all meet ; 490  
 The shiv'ring ICELANDER, and sun-burnt MOOR ;  
 Men of all climes, that never met before ;  
 And of all creeds, the JEW, the TURK, the CHRISTIAN.  
 HERE the proud PRINCE, and FAVOURITE yet prouder,  
 His Sov'reign's keeper, and the people's scourge, 495  
 Are huddled out of fight <sup>85</sup>. — HERE lie abash'd  
 The great NEGOTIATORS of the earth,  
 And celebrated MASTERS OF THE BALANCE,  
 Deep read in stratagems and wiles of courts <sup>86</sup> ;  
 Now vain their TREATY-SKILL. — Death scorns to treat.  
 HERE the o'erloaded SLAVE flings down his burden  
 From his gall'd shoulders ; — and when the cruel Tyrant,  
 With all his guards and tools of power about him,  
 Is meditating new unheard-of hardships,  
 Mocks his short arm ; — and quick as thought escapes 505  
 Where Tyrants vex not, and the weary rest <sup>87</sup>.

HERE the warm LOVER, leaving the cool shade,  
 The tell-tale Echo, and the babbling stream,  
 (Time out of mind the fav'rite seats of Love,)  
 Fast by his gentle mistress lays him down, 510  
 Unblasted by foul tongue. — HERE friends and foes  
 Lie close, unmindful of their former feuds <sup>88</sup>.

<sup>85</sup> Mors equo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas  
 Regumque turres. — Hor.

<sup>86</sup> The winding sheet and the coffin are the utmost bound of  
 all earthly devices ; hitherto they may go, but no farther. — *Hervey's Meditations*.

<sup>87</sup> Job, iii. 17.

<sup>88</sup> No cares nor passions here the bosom rend ;  
 Here wasting pains and earthly troubles cease ;  
 Here hopeless love and cruel hatred end,  
 And the world-weary trav'ler rests in peace.

*Solitary Walks.*

The lawn-rob'd PRELATE and plain PRESBYTER,  
 Ere while that stood aloof, as shy to meet,  
 Familiar mingle HERE, like sister streams 515  
 That some rude interposing rock had split.

HERE is the large-limb'd PEASANT:—HERE the  
 CHILD

Of a span long that never saw the sun,  
 Nor press'd the nipple, strangl'd in Life's porch.  
 HERE is the MOTHER, with her sons and daughters; 520  
 The barren WIFE, and long-demurring MAID,  
 Whose lonely unappropriated sweets  
 Smil'd like yon knot of cowslips on the cliff,  
 Not to be come at by the willing hand.  
 HERE are the PRUDE severe, and gay COQUET; 525  
 The sober WIDOW, and the young green VIRGIN,  
 Cropp'd like a rose before 'tis fully blown,  
 Or half its worth disclos'd. Strange medley HERE!

HERE garrulous OLD AGE winds up his tale;  
 And jovial YOUTH, of lightsome vacant heart <sup>89</sup>, 530  
 Whose ev'ry day was made of melody,  
 Hears not the voice of mirth <sup>90</sup>.—The shrill-tongu'd  
 SHREW,

Meek as the turtle dove, forgets her chiding.  
 HERE are the wise, the generous, and the brave;  
 The just, the good, the worthless, the profane, 535  
 The downright clown, and perfectly well bred;  
 The fool, the churl, the scoundrel, and the mean,  
 The supple statesman, and the patriot stern;

<sup>89</sup> Mista senum ac juvenum densantur funera.—Hor.

<sup>90</sup> Here youth and age in silence meet,  
 And death's pale vict'ry is complete.



The wrecks of Nations; and the spoils of Time,  
With all the lumber of fix thousand years. 540

POOR MAN!—how happy once in thy FIRST STATE!  
When yet but warm from thy great Maker's hand,  
He stamp'd thee with his image, and, well pleas'd,  
Smil'd on his last fair work <sup>91</sup>.—Then all was well.  
Sound was the BODY, and the SOUL serene; 545  
Like two sweet instruments, ne'er out of tune,  
That play their several parts.—Nor head, nor heart,  
Offer'd to ache: nor was there cause they should;  
For all was pure within: no fell remorse,  
Nor anxious castings-up of what might be, 550  
Alarm'd his peaceful bosom.—Summer seas  
Shew not more smooth, when kiss'd by southern winds,  
Just ready to expire.—Scarce importun'd,  
The generous soil, with a luxurious hand,  
Offer'd the various produce of the year, 555  
And ev'ry thing most perfect in its kind <sup>92</sup>.  
Blessed! thrice blessed days!—But, ah! how short!  
Bless'd as the pleasing dreams of Holy Men;  
But fugitive like those, and quickly gone.

OH! slipp'ry state of things!—What sudden turns!  
What strange vicissitudes in the first leaf 561  
Of man's sad history!—To-day most happy,  
And ere to-morrow's sun has set, most abject <sup>93</sup>.  
How scant the space between these vast extremes!

<sup>91</sup> Gen. i. 27.

<sup>92</sup> Gen. ii. 9.

<sup>93</sup> To-day he's honour'd, and in vast esteem,  
To-morrow not a beggar values him;  
To-day he's grand, majestic, all delight,  
Ghastly and pale before to-morrow night.

Thus

Thus far'd it with our SIRE :—Not long h' enjoy'd 565  
 His paradise.—Scarce had the happy tenant  
 Of the fair spot due time to prove its sweets,  
 Or sum them up, when ~~frail~~ <sup>frail</sup> he must be gone <sup>94</sup>,  
 Ne'er to return again.—And must he go?  
 Can nought compound for the *first* dire offence 570  
 Of erring man?—Like one that is condemn'd,  
 Fain would he trifle time with idle talk <sup>95</sup>,  
 And parley with his fate.—But 'tis in vain—  
 Not all the lavish odours of the place  
 Offer'd in incense can procure his pardon, 575  
 Or mitigate his doom.—A mighty Angel  
 With flaming sword forbids his longer stay,  
 And drives the loiterer forth; nor must he take  
 One last and farewell round.—At once he lost  
 His glory and his God.—If mortal now, 580  
 And sorely maim'd, no wonder.—MAN HAS SINN'D.  
 Sick of his blifs, and bent on new adventures,  
 EVIL he needs would try: nor try'd in vain.  
 (Dreadful experiment! destructive measure!  
 Where the worst thing could happen, is success.) 585  
 Alas! <sup>two</sup> well he sped: the GOOD he scorn'd  
 Stalk'd off reluctant like an ill-us'd ghost,  
 Not to return;—or if it did, its visits,  
 Like those of ANGELS, short and far between:  
 Whilst the black DÆMON, with his hell-scap'd train, 590  
 Admitted once into its better room,  
 Grew loud and mutinous, nor would be gone;  
 Lording it o'er the MAN: who now too late  
 Saw the rash error, which he could not mend <sup>96</sup>:  
 An error fatal not to him alone, 595

<sup>94</sup> Gen. iii. 24.

<sup>95</sup> See Milton's Paradise Lost, book x. line 845.

<sup>96</sup> Gen. iii. 23.



But to his future sons, his fortune's heirs <sup>97</sup>.  
 Inglorious bondage!—Human nature groans  
 Beneath a vassalage so vile and cruel,  
 And its vast body bleeds thro' ev'ry vein.

WHAT havock hast thou made, foul monster, SIN! 600  
 Greatest and first of Ills.—The fruitless parent  
 Of woes of all dimensions!—But for **THEE**  
 Sorrow had never been <sup>98</sup>.—All-noxious Thing,  
 Of vilest nature!—Other sorts of Evils  
 Are kindly circumscrib'd, and have their bounds. 605  
 The fierce VOLCANO, from his burning entrails,  
 That belches molten Stone and globes of Fire,  
 Involv'd in pitchy clouds of smoke and stench,  
 Mars the adjacent fields for some leagues round,  
 And there it stops <sup>99</sup>.—The big-swoln INUNDATION,  
 Of mischief more diffusive, raving loud, 610  
 Buries whole tracks of country, threatening more;  
 But that, too, has its shore it cannot pass <sup>100</sup>.  
 More dreadful far than these! SIN has laid waste,  
 Not here and there a country, but A WORLD <sup>101</sup>; 615  
 Dispatching at a wide-extended blow  
 Entire mankind; and for their sakes defacing  
 A whole Creation's beauty with rude hands <sup>102</sup>;

<sup>97</sup> Rom. v. 18.

<sup>98</sup> Milton thus describes the effects of Adam's sin in his inimitable poem entitled *Paradise Lost*:

..... the fruit

Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste

Brought death into the world, and all our woe.

<sup>99</sup> Mount *Ætna*.

<sup>100</sup> Thus saith the Almighty to the restless ocean, *Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.*—Job, xxxviii. 11.

<sup>101</sup> Rom. v. 12.

<sup>102</sup> Rom. viii. 22.

Blasting the foodful grain, the loaded branches,  
 And marking all along its way with ruin <sup>103</sup> 620  
 Accursed Thing!—Oh! where shall Fancy find  
 A proper name to call Thee by, expressive  
 Of all thy horrors?—Pregnant womb of Ills!  
 Of temper so transcendently malign,  
 That toads and serpents, of most deadly kind, 625  
 Compar'd to thee, are harmless.—Sicknesses  
 Of ev'ry size and symptom, racking pains,  
 And bluest plagues, are thine.—See how the Fiend  
 Profusely scatters the contagion round!  
 Whilst deep-mouth'd Slaughter, bellowing at her heels,  
 Wades deep in blood new spilt; yet for to-morrow 631  
 Shapes out new work of great uncommon daring,  
 And inly pines till the dread blow is struck <sup>104</sup>.

BUT hold:—I've gone too far; too much discover'd  
 My Father's nakedness, and Nature's shame.— 635  
 Here let me pause, and drop an honest tear,  
 One burst of filial duty and condolence,  
 O'er all those ample deserts DEATH hath spread;  
 This CHAOS of mankind.—O great MAN-EATER!  
 Whose ev'ry day is CARNIVAL, not fated yet! 640  
 Unheard-of EPICURE! without a fellow!  
 The veriest GLUTTONS do not *always* cram;  
 Some intervals of abstinence are fought  
 To edge the appetite: THOU seekest none <sup>105</sup>.

<sup>103</sup> Gen. iii. 17, 18.

<sup>104</sup> Milton speaking of the entrance of *sin* and *death* into *paradise*, upon our first parents eating the forbidden fruit, says,  
 . . . . . they both betook them several ways,  
 Both to destroy, or unimmortal make  
 All kinds, and for destruction to mature,  
 Sooner or later.—*Paradise Lost*, book x.

<sup>105</sup> Death's a devourer of *quotidian* prey.—*Night Thoughts*.



Methinks the countless swarms thou hast devour'd, 645  
 And thousands that each hour thou gobblest up,  
 THIS, less than THIS, might gorge thee to the full;  
 But, ah! rapacious still, thou gap'st for more:  
 Like one, whose days defrauded of his meals,  
 On whom lank Hunger lays her skinny hand, 650  
 And whets to keenest eagerness his cravings;  
 As if diseases, massacres, and poison,  
 Famine, and war, were not thy Caterers.

BUT know, that thou MUST RENDER UP THE DEAD,  
 And with high int'rest too.—They are not thine; 655  
 But only in thy keeping for a season,  
 Till the great promis'd day of Restitution <sup>106</sup>;  
 When loud diffusive sound of brazen trump  
 Of strong-lung'd Cherub, shall alarm thy Captives <sup>107</sup>,  
 And rouse the long, long sleepers into life, 660  
 Day-light and liberty <sup>108</sup>.—

THEN must thy gates fly open, and reveal  
 The mines that lay long forming under ground,  
 In their dark cells immur'd; but now full ripe,  
 And pure as silver from the crucible, 665  
 That twice has stood the torture of the fire  
 And inquisition of the forge.—We know  
 Th' illustrious Deliverer of mankind,  
 THE SON OF GOD, thee foil'd.—Him in thy pow'r  
 Thou couldst not hold:—self-vigorous he rose, 670  
 And shaking off thy fetters, soon retook  
 Those spoils his voluntary yielding lent <sup>109</sup>;  
 (Sure pledge of our releasement from thy thrall!)

<sup>106</sup> Mors janua vitæ.—*Virg.*

<sup>107</sup> Matt. xxiv. 31. Theff. iv. 16.

<sup>108</sup> I. Cor. xv. 52.

<sup>109</sup> Heb. ii. 14, 15.

Twice twenty days he sojourn'd here on earth,  
 And shew'd himself alive to CHOSEN WITNESSES, 675  
 By proofs so strong, that the most slow assenting  
 Had not a scruple left <sup>110</sup>.—This having done,  
 He mounted up to heav'n.—Methinks I see him  
 Climb the aerial height, and glide along  
 Athwart the sev'ring clouds: but the faint eye, 680  
 Flung backward in the chace, soon drops its hold,  
 Disabled quite, and jaded with pursuing.  
 Heav'n's portals wide expand to let him in;  
 Nor are his *friends* shut out: as some great Prince  
 Not for himself alone procures admission, 685  
 But for his train.—It was his Royal will,  
 That where he is, there should his *followers* be <sup>111</sup>.  
 DEATH only lies between.—A gloomy path!  
 Made yet more gloomy by our coward fears <sup>112</sup>:  
 But not untrod nor tedious; the fatigue 690  
 Will soon go off: beside, there's no *by-road*  
 To bliss <sup>113</sup>.—Then why, like ill-condition'd children,  
 Start we at transient hardships in the way  
 That leads to purer air, and softer skies,  
 And a ne'er-setting sun?—Fools that we are! 695  
 We wish to be where sweets unwith'ring bloom;

<sup>110</sup> Luke, xxiv. 39. John xx. 27, 28.

<sup>111</sup> John, xvii. 24.

<sup>112</sup> Death and his *image* rising in the *brain*,  
 Bear *faint* resemblance, never are *alike*;  
*Fear* shakes the pencil, *fancy* loyes excess,  
 Dark *ignorance* is lavish of her shades,  
 And *these* the formidable picture draw.—*Night Thoughts*.

<sup>113</sup> Dr. Young very beautifully expresses the real Christian's  
 sentiments respecting the last enemy of Nature, or rather happily  
 describes what death is to every true believer in Christ, in the fol-  
 lowing words:

Death is the portal to eternal life,  
 This king of terrors is the prince of peace.

*Night Thoughts*,

But



But strait our wish revoke, and will not go.  
 So have I seen, upon a summer's ev'n,  
 Fast by a riv'let's brink a youngster play :  
 How wishfully he looks to stem the tide ! 700  
 This moment resolute, next unresolv'd :  
 At last he dips his foot ; but as he dips,  
 His fears redouble, and he runs away  
 From th' inoffensive stream, unmindful now  
 Of all the flow'rs that paint the farther bank, 705  
 And smil'd so sweet of late.—Thrice welcome DEATH !  
 That after many a painful bleeding-step  
 Conducts us to our home, and lands us safe  
 On the long-wish'd-for shore <sup>114</sup>.—Prodigious change !  
 Our bane turn'd to a blessing !—DEATH, disarm'd, 710  
 Loses his fellness quite <sup>115</sup>.—All thanks to Him  
 Who scourg'd the venom out <sup>116</sup>.—Sure THE LAST  
 END  
 Of the good man is PEACE <sup>117</sup> !—How calm his EXIT !  
 Night-dews fall not more gently to the ground,  
 Nor weary worn-out winds expire so soft, 715  
 Behold him in the evening tide of life,  
 A life well spent, whose early care it was  
 His riper years should not upbraid his green :  
 (By unperceiv'd degrees he wears away ;  
 Yet, like the sun, seems larger at his setting : 720  
 (High in his faith and hopes) look how he reaches  
 After the prize in view ! and, like a bird  
 That's hamper'd, struggles hard to get away :

<sup>114</sup> . . . . . Life's a debtor to the grave ;

Dark lattice ! letting in eternal day.—*Night Thoughts.*

<sup>115</sup> Well may a dying Christian join with an inspired apostle  
 in crying out, *O Death ! where is thy sting ? O Grave ! where is  
 thy victory ?*—I. Cor. xv. 55.

<sup>116</sup> I. Cor. xv. 57.

<sup>117</sup> Isa. lvii. 2.

There is one Simon in  
 the world that Simon our met.  
 was 50 miles from Langryham  
 who must have custody feel the force of the sun

# THE GRAVE.

41

{ Whilst the glad gates of sight are wide expanded  
To let new glories in, the first fair fruits } 725  
Of the fast-coming harvest.—THEN!—Oh, THEN!  
Each earth-born joy grows vile, or disappears,  
Shrunk to a thing of nought.—Oh! how he longs  
To have his passport sign'd, and be dismiss'd <sup>118</sup>!  
'Tis done! and now he's happy!—The glad SOUL 730  
Has not a wish uncrown'd.—Ev'n the lag FLESH  
RESTS too IN HOPE of meeting once again  
Its better half, never to sunder more <sup>119</sup>;  
Nor shall it hope in vain <sup>120</sup>:—The time draws on  
When not a single spot of burial earth, 735  
Whether on land, or in the spacious sea,  
But must give back its long-committed dust  
Inviolat <sup>121</sup>:—and faithfully shall these  
Make up the full account; not the least atom  
Embezzl'd, or mislaid, of the whole tale. 740  
Each SOUL shall have a BODY ready furnish'd;  
And each shall have his own.—Hence ye profane!  
Ask not, how this can be?—Sure the same pow'r  
That rear'd the piece at first, and took it down,  
Can re-assemble the loose scatter'd parts, 745  
And put them as they were <sup>122</sup>.—Almighty God  
Has done much more; nor is his arm impair'd  
Through length of days: and what he can, he *will*:  
His Faithfulness stands bound to see it done <sup>123</sup>.

<sup>118</sup> II. Cor. v. 4.

<sup>119</sup> Psalms, xvi. 19.

<sup>120</sup> I. Cor. xv. 52.

<sup>121</sup> Rev. xx. 13.

<sup>122</sup> What the Almighty has declared in his word shall come to pass, however human reason may not be able to investigate the manner how, or the means by which it shall be effected. Pope very justly observes, man was not made to question but *adore*.—  
*Essay on Man*

<sup>123</sup> Matt. xxiv. 31. John vi. 39, 40.



When the dread trumpet sounds, the slumb'ring dust, 750  
 (Not unattentive to the call) shall wake <sup>124</sup>;  
 And ev'ry joint possesses its proper place,  
 With a new elegance of form, unknown  
 To its *first* state <sup>125</sup>.—Nor shall the conscious SOUL  
 Mistake its partner, but amidst the crowd, 755  
 Singling its other half, into its arms  
 Shall rush with all th' impatience of a man  
 That's new come home, who, having long been absent,  
 With haste runs over ev'ry different room,  
 In pain to see the whole. Thrice-happy meeting! 760  
 Nor TIME, nor DEATH, shall ever part them more <sup>126</sup>.  
 'Tis but a night, a long and moonless night;  
 We make the GRAVE our bed <sup>127</sup>, and then are gone <sup>128</sup>.

THUS at the shut of ev'n, the weary Bird  
 Leaves the wide air, and in some lonely brake 765  
 Cow'rs down, and dozes till the dawn of day,  
 Then claps his well-fledg'd wings, and bears away.

<sup>124</sup> . . . . . Death is the crown of life;  
 Were death denied, poor man would live in vain;  
 Death wounds to cure; we fall; we rise; we reign.  
*Night Thoughts.*

<sup>125</sup> Philip. iii. 21.

<sup>126</sup> I. Theff. iv. 17.

<sup>127</sup> Isa. lvii. 2.

<sup>128</sup> Man, thoughtless man! whose moments quickly fly,  
 Wakes but to *sleep* again, and lives to *die*;  
 And when this *present* fleeting life is o'er,  
 Man dies to *live*, and *lives* to die no more.

*Solitary Walks.*

Happy, thrice happy they, who meet death only as a *sleep*, out  
 of which they have good ground to hope they shall awake to life  
*eternal*. I. Theff. iv. 14.

Thus sings the late pious Dr. Watts, in his 117th psalm:  
 My flesh shall slumber in the ground,  
 Till the last trumpet's joyful sound,  
 Then burst the chains with sweet surprize,  
 And in my Saviour's image rise.

3.

A N

E L E G Y

WRITTEN IN A

COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD.

By Mr. GRAY,

F a



### THE ARGUMENT.

*A summer's evening described; its calmness disturbed by the beetle, sheepbells, and owl; a country church-yard portrayed, with its sleeping tenants; the vanity of ambition, power, and beauty; the folly of pompous epitaphs and inscriptions; true merit obscured by penury; rustic poverty not to be despised; love of life natural to all; what the poet's fate may be in some future period, related by old age, with his epitaph.*

A N  
E L E G Y.

---

The TIME, — *A Summer's Evening.*

I.

THE curfew <sup>129</sup> tolls the knell of parting day;  
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea;  
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,  
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

II.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,  
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,  
Save where the beetle wheels his drony flight,  
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds <sup>130</sup>;

III.

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r  
The moping owl does to the moon complain  
Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bow'r,  
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

---

<sup>129</sup> A bell which used to be rung every evening by order of William the Conqueror, as a signal for all persons to rake out their fires, and put out their lights.

<sup>130</sup> Every reader, who is an attentive observer of *rural* nature, must confess, while he cannot but admire, the beauty and natural colouring of this elegant description of a summer's eve.

IV. Beneath



## IV.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,  
 Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,  
 Each in his narrow cell *for ever* laid <sup>131</sup>,  
 The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep <sup>132</sup>.

## V.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,  
 The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,  
 The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,  
 No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed <sup>133</sup>.

## VI.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,  
 Or busy housewife ply her evening care :  
 No children run to lip their Sire's return,  
 Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share <sup>134</sup>.

## VII.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,  
 Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke ;  
 How jocund did they drive their team afield !  
 How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke !

<sup>131</sup> The term *for ever* laid, as it tends to mislead weak minds, to question the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, should be altered to *forgotten* laid.

<sup>132</sup> The following stanza was inserted in the first edition of this poem, but afterwards excluded :

Hark ! how the sacred calm that breathes around,  
 Bids every fierce tumultuous passion cease ;  
 In still, small accents whisp'ring from the ground,  
 A grateful earnest of eternal peace.

<sup>133</sup> *Requiescant in pace.*

<sup>134</sup> This picture of domestic happiness, or nuptial felicity, in rural life, is natural, interesting, and pathetic. — See *Thomson's Winter*, line 310, for a similar description.

VIII.

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,  
 Their homely joys and destiny obscure;  
 Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile  
 The short and simple annals of the poor <sup>135</sup>.

IX.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,  
 And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
 Await alike th' inevitable hour:  
 The paths of glory lead but to the grave <sup>136</sup>.

X.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault,  
 If Mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,  
 Where thro' the long-drawn isle and fretted vault  
 The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

XI.

Can storied urn or animated bust  
 Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?  
 Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,  
 Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull, cold ear of Death <sup>137</sup>?

XII.

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid  
 Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;  
 Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,  
 Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre <sup>138</sup>.

XIII. But

<sup>135</sup> The rich and great have no more reason to despise the poor and abject, than the latter have to envy the *farmer*, as both stand equally in need of the assistance of each other; in this respect, the *labour* of the one, and the *wages* of the other, may be suitably contrasted.

<sup>136</sup> Earth's highest station ends in here he lies,  
 And dust to dust concludes her noblest song. — *Night Tho.*

<sup>137</sup> The mockery of tombstone panegyric, or venal epitaphs, on the merits of deceased nobility, is here justly exposed.

<sup>138</sup> Many a poor man has possessed such a genius and abilities



## XIII.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,  
 Rich with the spoils of Time, did ne'er unroll :  
 Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,  
 And froze the genial current of the soul <sup>139</sup>.

## XIV.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene  
 The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear ;  
 Full many a flow'r is born to blush unseen,  
 And waste its sweetness on the desert air <sup>140</sup>.

## XV.

Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast  
 The little tyrant of his fields withstood ;  
 Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,  
 Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood <sup>141</sup>.

## XVI.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,  
 The threats of pain and ruin to despise,  
 To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,  
 And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

lities as would have ennobled the brightest characters, and adorned the most elevated stations ; but indigence has obscured his talents, and confined him within the narrow circle of a country village ; yet still he might be a worthy and useful member of society, though a stranger to nobility and affluence.

<sup>139</sup> Poverty may suppress the *sentiments*, but cannot alter the *feelings* or *disposition* of a truly noble, generous, and aspiring mind.

<sup>140</sup> The following lines, taken from an edition of Gray's Poems published in Dublin, are no indifferent parody on the above stanza :

Full many a lark, high tow'ring to the sky,  
 Unheard, unheeded, greets th' approach of light ;

Full many a star, unseen by mortal eye,  
 With twinkling lustre glimmers thro' the night.

<sup>141</sup> See a Criticism on this Elegy, published by Cadell.

XVII. Their

XVII.

Their lot forbade; nor circumscrib'd alone  
 Their growing virtues, but their *crimes* confin'd;  
 Forbade to wade thro' slaughter to a throne,  
 And shut the gates of mercy on mankind <sup>142</sup>;

XVIII.

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,  
 To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,  
 Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride  
 With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

XIX.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,  
 Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;  
 Along the cool sequester'd vale of life  
 They kept the noiseless tenor of their way <sup>143</sup>.

XX.

Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect,  
 Some frail memorial still erected nigh,  
 With uncouth rhimes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,  
 Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

XXI.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd Muse,  
 The place of fame and elegy supply:  
 And many a holy text around she strews,  
 That teach the rustic moralist to die <sup>144</sup>.

XXII. For

<sup>142</sup> The more exalted the station, the greater are the opportunities of doing good or evil among mankind at large.

<sup>143</sup> The wisdom of Providence is conspicuous in suiting the mind to the station, and giving content where he does not see fit to bestow wealth.

<sup>144</sup> The following common, and no improper epitaph, however



## XXII.

For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey  
 This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,  
 Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,  
 Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind <sup>145</sup>;

## XXIII.

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,  
 Some pious drops the closing eye requires;  
 Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,  
 Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires <sup>146</sup>.

## XXIV.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd Dead,  
 Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;  
 If chance, by lonely Contemplation led,  
 Some kindred Spirit shall inquire *thy* fate;

## XXV.

Haply some hoary-headed Swain may say,  
 ' Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn  
 ' Brushing with hasty steps the dews away  
 ' To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

---

ever plain it may be accounted, is frequently to be met with in country church-yards:

*As I am now, so you must be,  
 Prepare in time to follow me.*

N. B. A suitable admonition to every reader, whether young or old, rich or poor.

<sup>145</sup> However this may be applicable to mankind in general in the views of death, it seems inconsistent with the apostle's language in Philip. i. 28. *Having a desire to depart.*

<sup>146</sup> The two last lines of this stanza is somewhat ambiguous; neither the truths of revelation, nor the dictates of right reason, support the sentiments, or countenance the extravagant ideas they hold out. Well may they be said by the Author of the Criticism on this Elegy, to contain a position at which *Experience* revolts, *Credulity* hesitates, and even *Fancy* stares.

XXVI. 'There

XXVI.

- ‘ There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,  
 ‘ That wreaths its old fantastic roots so high,  
 ‘ His lifeless length at noon tide would he stretch,  
 ‘ And pore upon the brook that babbles by <sup>147</sup>,

XXVII.

- ‘ Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,  
 ‘ Mutt’ring his wayward fancies he would rove;  
 ‘ Now drooping, woeful, wan, like one forlorn,  
 ‘ Or craz’d with care, or cross’d in hopeless love,

XXVIII.

- ‘ One morn I miss’d him on the custom’d hill,  
 ‘ Along the heath, and near his fav’rite tree;  
 ‘ Another came; nor yet beside the rill,  
 ‘ Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he,

XXIX.

- ‘ The next, with dirges due, in sad array,  
 ‘ Slow thro’ the church-way path we saw him borne.  
 ‘ Approach, and read (for thou canst read) the lay  
 ‘ Grav’d on the stone beneath yon aged thorn <sup>148</sup>.

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<sup>147</sup> The following stanza appeared in the first edition of this poem, but have been since omitted.

Him have we seen the green wood side along,  
 While o’er the heath we past, our labour done;  
 Oft as the wood lark pip’d her farewell song,  
 With wistful eyes pursue the setting sun.

<sup>148</sup> The following lines were inserted here in the early editions of this work:

There scatter’d oft, the earliest of the year,  
 By hands unseen are show’rs of v’lets found;  
 The redbreast loves to build and warble there,  
 And little footsteps lightly trip the ground.



T H E  
E P I T A P H.

## I.

HERE rests his head upon the lap of Earth,  
A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown;  
Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,  
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.

## II.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere.  
Heav'n did a recompense as largely send:  
He gave to mis'ry all he had, a tear,  
He gain'd from Heav'n ('twas all he wish'd) a friend<sup>149</sup>.

## III.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,  
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode<sup>150</sup>,  
(There they alike in trembling hope repose)  
The bosom of his Father and his God<sup>151</sup>.

<sup>149</sup> The poet here seems to have in view Dr. Young's Estimate of a real friend:

Poor is the *friendless* master of a world,  
A world in purchase for a friend is gain.—*Night Thoughts*.

<sup>150</sup> *De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*

<sup>151</sup> The idea of the bosom of his God being the abode of his merits and frailties, evidently refers either to the book of remembrance spoken of in Malachi, iii. 16. or the wise man's awful declaration in the xiith of Ecclesiastes and 14th verse: *For God shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*